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## **Iraq**

**Post:** Baghdad

### **Current News in Agriculture and USDA in Iraq**

#### **Report Categories:**

Grain and Feed

Agriculture in the News

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#### **Report Highlights:**

# **MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE**

**General Information:**

**SaD Visit for OAA Baghdad** – No, don't be misled; the visit was all good. The Baghdad office AgEconomist John Schnittker, Extension Advisor David Drew and AgCounselor Ron Verdonk visited PRT Salah ed Din near Tikrit March 22-27 to get a first-hand look at work being implemented by PRT AgAdvisors Sainey Ceesay and Tom Pick. Stops included a Ministry of Agriculture corn mill, an appt. with the provincial Directors General for Agriculture and Extension, and two farms growing wheat and barley and assorted vegetables west of the Hamrines (hill/mountain range). Pictures from the visit are on the FAS website at: [http://www.fas.usda.gov/country/Iraq/development/photos\\_march2010.asp](http://www.fas.usda.gov/country/Iraq/development/photos_march2010.asp).

**Comprehensive Report on Challenges to Feed Exports to Iraq** –Based on a recent visit of OAA Baghdad representatives along with two from ASA, we just issued a report examining challenges in Iraqi grain inspection/clearance procedures and how bulk feed grain and protein meal shipments can be imported through the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. Copies of the report have been shared and begun to be discussed with Ministry of Agriculture officials. Inordinately high feed prices for Iraqi poultry and livestock producers have led to high priced Iraqi poultry and red meat, and this office is working to find path leading to vessel-sized corn and soybean meal shipments to make domestic Iraqi meat production more competitive.

**Trade and Investment Mission** – OAA Baghdad was going to team up with DoC colleagues here to organize a multi-sector Trade and Investment Mission June 6-10, 2010. Commerce has decided to postpone until October, but our agribusiness mission goes forward. So far, 15 companies are signed up to participate representing different segments of the agricultural economy. FAS Administrator John Brewer will lead the U.S. team. Darrell Upshaw is the FAS POC for this event.

**FY09 Supplemental Funds Are Accessible** – Four score and seven.... Well, it didn't take that long, but we got word from State/W colleagues that the \$8 million in supplemental funding being provided to FAS to conduct capacity building and development initiatives in Iraq is now available, subsequent to the Congressional Notification made by State to the Congress on March 24<sup>th</sup>. OAA Baghdad has a range of activities to implement including strengthening animal health organizations to soil survey and fertility evaluation to assisting the Iraqis in running their domestic their food assistance programs more efficiently.

**Personnel Update** – There are currently 35 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, or embedded with U.S. military units. Attaché Paul Spencer, Soil scientist Mike Gangwer, and BBA Saad Kadum are on R&R while BBA Dr. Al-Shabibi is returning from leave. Bob Glasgow who completed his stint as PRT Liaison in February returns this week to begin work as an AgAdvisor at PRT Babil.